

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are currently pending in the present application, with claims 8-9 canceled and their subject matter incorporated into independent claim 1.

Claims 13-14 stand withdrawn pursuant to the previous election/restriction requirement.

The Applicants wish to express their appreciation for the courtesies extended by the Examiner in the Interview conducted on July 6, 2004. The foregoing amendments and following remarks are consistent with the discussions and agreements reached in the Interview.

Drawing Objection: In the Interview, specification passages at pages 8 and 9, discussing the distinct longitudinal and horizontal (*i.e.*, transverse) axes, were identified. In view of the unambiguous definition of the axes relative to the vehicle set forth in the specification, it was agreed that a drawing revision was not required. Withdrawal of the pending drawing objection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under § 103(a): Claims 8-9 (now incorporated into independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-3) stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,234,041 to Larabet, *et al.* ("Larabet"). The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the grounds that Larabet does not teach or suggest all the features of the present invention recited in amended claim 1.

As discussed in the July 6, 2004 Interview, claim 1 as amended, recites a door handle arrangement in which both: (1) the handle swivel axis is tilted away

from the vehicle's vertical axis; *and* (2) the upper and/or under sides of the handle pull extend parallel to a horizontal plane. Larabet teaches only a door handle arrangement in which the swivel axis and the handle pull axis are perpendicular to one another. In other words, either the Larabet swivel axis is tilted, in which case its handle pull sides are not in a horizontal plane, or if the Larabet door handle arrangement is rotated so that its handle pull sides are in a horizontal plane, its swivel axis is vertical (not tilted). Accordingly, Larabet does not teach or suggest the invention recited in amended claim 1.

As a separate matter, in the pending April 2, 2004 Office Action, the Examiner maintains the arrangement of the handle pull does not provide utility in the movement of the door handle, but is just for aesthetics. The Applicants respectfully submit that the arrangement of the handle pull in the present invention is not a matter of aesthetic design, but is a function of its advantageous utility. In combination with the tilted swivel axis of the pull, the horizontal side(s) enhance the comfort of the handle operator's motion in operating the handle. In addition, the horizontal side(s) may permit small, but not insignificant, contributions to aerodynamics (including reduction in both unwanted noise and/or wind drag), as well as potentially allowing the operator's hand to more easily grab the handle without striking the hand on the recess wall (effectively increasing the space available in the recess behind the handle). The recited handle pull side arrangement thus is not a matter of aesthetic design.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending § 103(a) rejection of claims 8-9 (now amended claims 1-3) is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

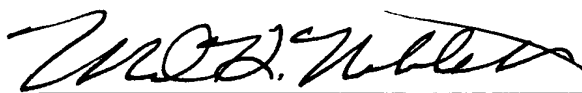
For the foregoing reasons, the Applicants believe amended claims 1-3 are in allowable form. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance for these claims is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #225/50556US).

Respectfully submitted,

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